ENCOUNTERS

Design: Cindy Bouwers

Saturday
October 5, 1991
Convocation Hall
8:00 pm

The Department of Music

presents

ENCOUNTERS I

The first in a series of four concerts.

Artistic Directors:
Malcolm Forsyth, William H Street

PROGRAMME

Sonata in D, for Two Pianos, K.448 (1781)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro con spirito
Andante
Allegretto molto

Helmut Brauss (piano)
Stéphane Lemelin (piano)

Northern Journey (1989)
(World Premiere)
Violet Archer
(b. 1913)
Poems: Inge Israel

Auyuittuq
Winter Sky
Delta
Kluane Glaciers

Harold Wiens (baritone)
Diana Wiens (piano)

Tour de France (1990)
Alfred Fisher
(b. 1942)

William H Street (alto saxophone)
Stéphane Lemelin (piano)

Jour de Marché: Messrs. Ravel et Dreyfuss
Monsieur Le Postmoderne
Carpentras
Le Mignon minime

INTERMISSION

Piano Quartet no. 1, in G minor, op. 25 (1861)
Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Stéphane Lemelin (piano)
Dianne New (violin)
Michael Bowie (viola)
Tanya Prochazka (violoncello)

Allegro
Intermezzo: Allegro ma non troppo
Andante con molto
Rondo alla Zingarese

PROGRAM NOTES:

Sonata in D for Two Pianos K.448 — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

WA Mozart finished his Sonata for two pianos K.448 in November 1781 probably envisaging a possible performance with his pupil Josephine von Auernhammer whose beauty, according to contemporary accounts, seems to have been inversely proportionate to her quite considerable musical talent.

As a matter of fact, Mozart played the premiere performance with Josephine on November 23, 1781 in the Auernhammer residence in Vienna.

Like a number of other works in the key of D-major (e.g. the piano sonatas K.284 and K.311) this work emphasizes, in a most positive way, the concertante style of the *galant* period so obvious in many of Mozart's more occasional compositions like some of the divertimenti and cassations. Virtuosity plays an important role in the corner movements and is exploited with ingenuity and superb compositional skill. The formal structures of all three movements are quite conventional: the first two movements follow the Sonata Movement form, the last the Rondo-Sonata form.

The focus on brilliant, virtuosic passage-work plus a few other ingredients of showmanship do not necessarily imply negative connotations. The joyful response this very popular work with its intricate intertwining of two equally treated piano parts usually evokes in a receptive audience testifies to this fact. It is interesting to note that in a publisher's advertisement of the time (1792) reference is made to the Sonata K.448 as being for "2 clavicemb." (2 harpsichords). This shows that both the harpsichord and the piano were similarly used at that time, although the latter rather quickly took over as the major medium for keyboard music in the private realm as well as in public. It further testifies to the, at that time (and much more so earlier), existing ambiguity as to which type of keyboard instrument was to be a legitimate performance vehicle for the keyboard music of the time. Although our modern pianos certainly have less transparency and built-in articulative characteristics than the fortepianos of Mozart's time, they serve us well with many other qualities lacking in those older types of instruments. It seems that when music itself is of high quality and performed well it will transcend possible limitations of the various performance media. The joy radiating from Mozart's music leaves behind all the controversial pros and cons accompanying the present day discussions within the period-instrument movement.

(Helmut Brauss)

Northern Journey

Violet Archer
Poems by Inge Israel

The set consists of four dramatic and contrasting *tableaux* inspired by the poet's visit to places in the Canadian Yukon and Northwest Territories. The composer has sought to capture and convey in music the intense drama expressed in these poems. The fourth poem, which at first refers to a scene of frustration and suffering in hell in the Inferno in Dante's *Divine Comedy,* ends triumphantly, realising a sense of the inevitable resulting from each song's evolution and interconnection.

1. AUYUITTUQ, a place in the Northwest Territories
2. WINTER SKY
3. DELTA, in northern Manitoba
4. KLUANE GLACIERS, in the Yukon

(Violet Archer)

Auyuittuq

We felt the Ice Age linger
knew it could start again
under weak suns

saw the white-lipped horizon
of a world
that had never been young

then arctic cotton seduced
with fluffy softness
purple saxifrage kindled
ice crystals and we breathed
warm guilt into the cold air
till the illusion became complete
and self-sustaining

but this is where Goddess Earth
was bedded by Odin
who still roars mockery
across the glaciers

where narwhals turn
a simple tooth into a sword
and loons burst into maniacal laughter

even the ice groans.

Winter Sky

We laid offerings of silence
at one another's feet
then stumbled over them
your eyes were desperate
eloquent prisoners
and the moon
a forbidden apple
tasted and hurled back
to the black tree of night
bereft of birds
stretching to infinity
hung with crowns
of glinting thorns

all at once the arctic wind
stopped time
careful not to ruffle
wafting wings
or quench flaming feet
and allowed the Aurora
to dance.

Delta

The barest touch of hands
or pressure of elbows
and instantly we had the taste
of forest fires in our throats
as do the whistling swans
whom it spurs on to this oasis
where they pluck
preludial sky-strings
and only then descend
in majestic garlands

we saw smoke rise
felt but did not see the raging
flames envelop stoic spruce
their every needle erect
till the last crumbling moment
the same moment that liberates
the jack pine cone
after years of waiting
for chastity to melt
in the heat of a blaze
so it can open at last
and lick dry lips

in flayed fields left behind
under unmelting skies
sand-coloured tumbleweed
flung itself
into a delirious fertility romp.

Kluane Glaciers

Some crawl to their death
others gallop
- surging waves
  across arid valleys

you came down standing tall

but all who descend
abandon hope

like Dante's Ugolino
they pass over their progeny
unable to feed on them
with his choked voice
they cry their penitence
but there is no confessor
to hear them

victims, not of the devil
but of their own passions
of the spirit within
the hell on earth
the life that is incessant dying
the effort of stretching
the present to infinity
of pausing at the apex
of existence - the split second
after the last step of the climb
that spells finality

... and resurrection.

Tour de France

Alfred Fisher

There really was a Tour de France. In early autumn of '89 I whetted my lifelong fascination for things French by motoring from Flanders to Provence. Such an adventure, gratifying though it was, proved to be more inflammatory than satisfying. I decided to write this little piece for saxophone and piano and offer it to myself as consolation for leaving and in anticipation of returning.

Tour de France continued

Though invented by a Belgian and developed by Americans to the status of a "folk instrument," it is the French who have accorded the saxophone "legitimacy" as an instrument for "serious" musical expression. Each of the four movements abstracts, at some level, a "French" point of reference. They ought not to be "explained," both because such references are not essential to either the structure or comprehension of the music and because, quite simply, I would not want to compromise the *goût* of my own music.

Suffice it to say that Movement I is a bit of *espièglerie* with a razor edge. Movement II is a spoof of less acerbic intentions (this too is "French") playing the honoured, inexhaustible tradition of intellectual tribalism. Movement IV brings the piece to a truncated, breathless (figuratively and literally) conclusion, sealing the piece absolutely from even the suggestion of non-Gallic pretensions of symmetry. Movement III, however, is mine, Wholly mine. Carpentras is a place. It is surrounded by lyrical hills covered in myrrh and lavender. It encompasses history. I will not forget Carpentras.

(Alfred Fisher)

Piano Quartet No. 1, G minor, op. 25 — Johannes Brahms

A first draft of this Piano Quartet was rehearsed in 1859, when Brahms was twenty-six years old. The qualities to be expected of a young man of that age are all to be found in the work--searching, enthusiasm, vigour--but so too are the harrowing results of Brahms's relationship with Clara Schumann.

Revisions to this Quartet were completed in 1861 and the work was among those chosen to launch the young composer on his first visit to Vienna in September 1862 (he was to settle there the following year). After a private performance by Brahms and members of the Hellmesberger String Quartet, the Piano Quartet was repeated publicly by the same performers in November, and immediately awakened interest in the composer. The interest did not amount to universal acceptance of the Quartet but at least one publisher approached Brahms. The work was eventually published by Simrock in Bonn early in 1863 and became one of the most popular pieces amongst Brahms's chamber music output.

A recurring contemporary criticism points to an overabundance of themes in the first, sonata-allegro, movement. But certainly Schubert would have appreciated the Brahms's exuberant wealth of material, and more to the point perhaps is Tovey's description of the first movement as a "most original and impressive tragic composition". The mood is set by the first theme, characterized by unusually extended phrase lengths. The second main theme is approached by a transition that the composer's friendly critic, Joseph Joachim, had found "positively painful", but in an earlier version surely? The 'cello introduces an idea that eventually evolves into this second theme, played by the violin and viola in unison, *'molto espressivo'*, (Mention of the instrumentation reminds us of the

Piano Quartet No. 1, G minor, op. 25 continued

great variety of colour achieved here and of the close relationship between the tone of the instruments and the musical ideas.) There follows a boisterous, warm, peasant-like melody, reminiscent of German folk song, with a "bagpipe drone" bass. The exposition of the thematic material is stated once only: the customary repetition of this section of a first movement is not indicated and the Exposition dovetails neatly into the Development. It is in the subsequent Recapitulation that we appreciate the aptness of Tovey's epithet "tragic". Themes heard in the Exposition as triumphant or tender are dramatically transformed into tragedy and pathos, the expressive transformation being achieved by changes from major to minor modes, the choice of differently 'coloured' keys, and once again the subtle selection of appropriate instrumental timbres.

The Intermezzo is a large Scherzo and Trio but in this case not the type of scherzo that would conventionally provide a contrast in mood with the following slow movement. In fact this highly original piece is tender, pathetic, and mysterious since it "seems set in a half light" (HC Colles). Much of this atmosphere is again created by instrumental colour, notably that of the muted violin. (This is one of Brahms's typical movements: however much of the manner of this Piano Quartet the composer chose to discard in the course of his career, this type of piece reappears time and time again.)

The third movement, *Andante,* is a large scale A B A construction. The first theme, lyrical and placid, gives no indication of the exuberance to come. We notice again in this first section Brahms's delight in restating thematic material with varied instrumentation. The B section, the point to which the first has been working, is a great contrast: a sparkling "military" episode, albeit a march in triple meter. The brilliance of the instrumentation and the judicious balancing of piano and strings in an almost orchestral style contribute to the excitement. A most eloquent quietening leads to a return of the first section material.

Joseph Joachim was "shocked" by the last movement. True, it is a rather rowdy piece, making use of sectional, dance-like forms in contrast to the organically conceived previous movements. It is in fact the first occasion on which Brahms introduced into a larger work the energetic rhythms of the refugee Gypsy bands that he had heard in his home town of Hamburg. (The composer's collection of *Hungarian Dances* had begun to appear in 1852.) In shape, the movement is a Rondo with five distinct melodies, and the exuberance of the dance is quieted momentarily by the aptly timed appearance of the fifth theme, a gloriously rhapsodic, *cantabile* duet for 'cello and viola. But what makes this Hungarian Rondo unlike any other in Brahms's output is the inclusion of a lengthy cadenza for all the instruments. A cadenza is an unusual feature in chamber music, but here it fulfills the task of relieving the almost mechanically sectional character of the movement, gathering up all the themes of the Rondo and combining them in a contrastingly rich contrapuntal texture. After this lengthy digression, the dance resumes and the movement rushes to a riotous conclusion.

(Michael Bowie)

Selections from tonight's concert are being recorded by the CBC for broadcast on *Arts National,* heard between 8:00 and 10:00 pm weeknights on CBC Stereo 90.9 and on *Sunday Arts,* heard between 6:00 and 8:30 am on CBC 740. These works will also be heard on a future broadcast of *Alberta In Concert,* aired Sunday evenings at 8:05 pm on CBC Stereo 90.9.

The next concert in the 1991-92 ENCOUNTERS series will take place on Saturday, December 7, 1991 at 8 pm in Convocation Hall.

Program and performers:

WA Mozart: *Piano Trio in D minor, K.442,* Richard Troger, fortepiano; Nienke Klaver, baroque violin; Colin Ryan, baroque violoncello.

David Baker: *Sonata for Tuba and String Quartet,* Scott Whetham, tuba; Norman Nelson, violin; Roxanne Whetham, violin; Evan Verchomin, viola; Tanya Prochazka, violoncello.

Ludwig van Beethoven: *Sonata in Eb major, op. 81a, "Les Adieux",* Helmut Brauss, piano.

Ned Rorem: *Trio,* Shelley Younge, flute; Tanya Prochazka, violoncello; Roger Admiral, piano.

Stay informed! The Department of Music's newsletter **In Tune** *Words on Music* contains concert and events listings as well as informative articles about the activities of our students, staff and alumni. Pick up your copy from the racks outside of Convocation Hall or call the Department of Music at 492-3263 and arrange to have **In Tune** mailed to your home.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Fri., October 11, 1991 at 8 pm Convocation Hall Tickets: $7 & $5	**Faculty Recital: William H Street, saxophonist** with Alexandra Munn, pianist and Geoff Whittall, marimbist. Program will include works by Desenclos, Lauba, Forsyth, Yuyama, Sandroff and Bach.
Wed., October 16, 1991 12:10 to 12:50 pm Convocation Hall Free Admission	**Visiting Artist: Krista Buckland, violinist** with Lydia Wong, pianist. Krista is the 1991 Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition winner. The program will include works by Raum, Robinovitch, Eckhardt-Gramatté and Prokofiev.
Sun., October 20, 1991 at 8 pm Convocation Hall Tickets: $5 & $3	**Academy Strings Concert,** Norman Nelson, director Program: Purcell's *Fantasia no. 10,* Elgar's *Serenade for Strings* and Shostakovich's *Chamber Symphony for Strings, opus 110A.*
October 22 to November 3 Convocation Hall Free Admission	**Tri-BACH Artist-in-Residence: Paul Badura-Skoda** Mr Badura Skoda will present numerous masterclasses and lectures during his stay in the Department of Music. Please consult **In Tune** for a detailed schedule of these events.
Fri., October 25, 1991 at 8 pm Jubilee Auditorium Tickets at BASS outlets	**Tri-BACH Artist-in-Residence: Paul Badura-Skoda** A solo piano recital featuring the Music of Mozart: *Variations on "Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman" in C Major, K.265; Rondo in A Minor, K.511; Sonata in B-flat major, K.333; Fantasy in C minor, K.475;* and *Sonata in C minor, K.457.*
Mon., November 4, 1991 at 8 pm Convocation Hall Free Admission	**Visiting Lecturer: Dr Eva Badura-Skoda** *"The Sound of Fortepianos in the Eighteenth Century"*

For further information please contact the Department of Music general office, 3-82 Fine Arts Bldg. University of Alberta, 492-3263.